

was his blanket adaptation of the term “immigrants” for all Latinos in Charlotte. This at times ran counter to his insightful description of the diversity of Latinos in the city with respect to class identity, legal status, citizenship, and migration experience, such as the case of Puerto Ricans in the city who are considered nonimmigrants. Withstanding these small injuries, the author adds another important dimension to the still expanding literature on Latinos in the South and the critical role of popular music.

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The Hippest Trip in America: Soul Train and the Evolution of Culture and Style. Nelson George. New York: William Morrow, 2014. 236 pp. \$22.40 cloth.

Soul Train, a black music variety show, first aired in 1970 on the Chicago-based station WCUI-TV. The show would move to Los Angeles, CA after receiving the green light for national syndication in 1971 and would remain on the air until 2006. After thirty-five years of syndication, *Soul Train* more than captivated black America; it showcased and shaped “black cool,” allowed for imagined black collectivity to exist in the public sphere and became a platform on which black politics and black aesthetic practices were indivisible.

There have been texts that have taken up *Soul Train* as its object, but Nelson George’s *The Hippest Trip in America: Soul Train and the Evolution of Culture and Style* is the most recently published of the few. *The Hippest Trip in America* narrates an extensive history of *Soul Train* that attempts to chart the show’s evolution as a black popular culture phenomenon. Using interviews from the VH1 documentary *The Hippest Trip in America* (2010), as well as readings of episode footage, George writes a text that convenes the many voices of the people that made *Soul Train* the show that it was. Not only does the text work as a history of the famous show but it is also a biographical portrait of the show’s creator, Don Cornelius.

The Hippest Trip in America consists of an introduction, twenty-one chapters, and dancer profiles that are intermittently woven into the text. The book spans from Don Cornelius’s beginnings in

Chicago as a journalist and disk jockey who had ties to the Civil Rights Movement, to his untimely death, all while detailing some of the greatest performances and dancers in *Soul Train's* history. It tells the story of a show that uniquely showcased black popular music and innovated and cultivated black popular dance forms over the span of thirty-five years.

The Hippest Trip in America is thorough in its history of the show and considers the lasting impact and legacies of the show, both on black America and beyond. George reminds us that despite *Soul Train* being born out of the segregated music market of the early 1970s, it would come to dictate trends in American popular culture, as well as have lasting legacies abroad. In addition, it reveals how black viewers not only gravitated toward the show but also how the tastes of black American viewers cultivated the talent that performed on *Soul Train*, not monolithic and fetishized notions of blackness, which overdetermined the show's short-lived competitor, *Soul Unlimited*. As aforementioned, the book also thoughtfully provides a complex, multidimensional portrait of the show's creator. With chapters like "Hip-Hop vs. *Soul Train*" and "Jody and Jeffrey (and O'Bryan)," George takes a nuanced approach to writing about Cornelius, detailing his tenuous relationship with the emergence of Hip-Hop culture, as well as his off-screen work to cofound *Soul Train Records* with Dick Griffey in 1975.

Despite this harrowing work of the book, George's singular understanding of the "African-American" subject, which he equates with black manhood, and his valorization of Cornelius as a black venture capitalist, which forecloses how black sexual economies (particularly femme and queer) sustained and produced *Soul Train* as a black popular culture phenomenon, are two limitations of the text. For example, chapter nine, "Disco Fever," details disco's relationship with *Soul Train* and seemingly treats disco as an antagonism to black popular culture, as opposed to a genre of black popular music that could not exist without black queer men or black women performers. According to George, "While disco definitely sucked a lot of soul out of popular black music, it didn't diminish *Soul Train*. In some ways, it helped the show" (119), and indeed, black disco artists such as Donna Summer performed on *Soul Train*.

Mitigating black sexuality and black sexual economies, *The Hippest Trip in America* narrates a history that, in moments, flattens out the complex relationship that black women and black queer men

had with the show. George fails to acknowledge that *Soul Train's* aesthetics could not exist nor be maintained without black women's and black queer men's labor. While George is careful to not "ghettoize" what he calls "gay culture" and "disconnect any discussion of *Soul Train* dance from gay club culture," he mistakenly presumes that black queer culture and gay culture are one in the same (63).

Soul Train would come to define a generation, but the labor of black women and black queer men that gave shape and definition to the show has often gone ignored. *The Hippest Trip in America* details the presence of Tyrone Proctor, a black gay dancer on the show, but not once stops to discuss the ways that black queer people were excluded from white, gay spaces and in return had to use other spaces, like *Soul Train*, to produce their own forms of sociality. Jody Watley, a dancer of the show, once remarked that "though unspoken, *Soul Train* had an obvious black male gay culture going on, and for that reason the show was also quite forward. Don allowed everyone to be themselves on camera—that's clear when you watch old clips" (63). Authors writing about the show would be remiss to not talk about the particularities of black gay culture, especially considering this cultural formation was borne out of the same antiblackness and racism that necessitated the creation of *Soul Train*.

The chapter that demonstrates the relationship of the two shortcomings of the book is Chapter 14, "Sex and *Soul Train*." This chapter elides black sexual economies that sustained *Soul Train*, in this instance, the utility of black women dancers of *Soul Train*. The chapter's heterosexual and masculinist narration presumes that the sexual politics of *Soul Train* can be quarantined to one chapter, rather than figured as central to the production and maintenance of *Soul Train*, both as a show and black cultural phenomenon. Rather than give depth to the relationship between black women *Soul Train* dancers and black men participants of the show, this chapter fails to acknowledge or critically think about how an exploitive sexual politics often governed the experiences of black women dancers on *Soul Train*. Specifically, we can think of Rosie Perez's experience as a *Soul Train* dancer and Don Cornelius' attempts to exploit her talents for a female vocal trio.¹

Nonetheless, capitalizing on his authority as a critic of black popular culture, Nelson George writes a popular culture text that contributes to the histories *Soul Train* while cultivating and collecting

interviews that narrate who the most influential affiliates of *Soul Train* were.

Note

1. Rosie Perez remarked on her recruitment for the female vocal trio by Don by saying: "I told Don I could carry a tune, but I couldn't *sing* sing, you know. He told me, 'It's irrelevant the way you sing. What's relevant is the way you dance and the way you wear your clothes'" (164).

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The Rebirth of Professional Soccer in America: The Strange Days of the United Soccer Association. Dennis Seese. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015. 308 pp. \$47.00 paper.

The history of soccer in the United States dates back to the late nineteenth century. Since its infancy, America's soccer community has witnessed multiple professional leagues and teams that have been established and folded, including the most recent establishment of Major League Soccer, a venture that was launched in 1996 and has expanded to twenty teams as of 2015. While the rise and fall of soccer in the United States has been partially impacted by the influx of immigrants and the economic hardships in the first half of the twentieth century, the end of the 1960s saw a unique period of turmoil, as two professional leagues coexisted in the United States, and it is this period of the "relaunch/rebirth of professional soccer" in the country that Dennis Seese examines in his new work (1).

Seese's focus is on the years between 1967 and 1969. After the 1966 FIFA World Cup in England that recorded a large television audience in the United States, the stage was set for soccer to gain momentum in the United States. Utilizing his experience with the International Soccer League that operated in the United States between 1960 and 1965, William Cox and his colleagues launched the National Professional Soccer League (NPSL) in 1967. Around the same time, another group of sports entrepreneurs launched the North American Soccer League, later renamed the United Soccer Association (USA). Because the NPSL was ready to start in 1967,